



CORRIDOR WORKING GROUP KICK-OFF MEETING SUMMARY

Meeting date: December 19, 2005

Location: Monroe Public Library – 1070 Village Way, Monroe

Attendees:

Partners in attendance:

- Kevin Murphy - Puget Sound Regional Council
- Brent Russell - Community Transit
- Mark Melroy - King County
- Larry Ingalls - City of Snohomish
- Hiller West, Tom Gathmann - City of Monroe
- John Light - City of Gold Bar
- Bill Cross - Town of Index
- Mayor Charlotte Mackner - Town of Skykomish
- Renee Zimmerman, Chris Picard, Richard Warren - WSDOT Urban Planning Office
- Tom Simpson, Mike Mansfield, Rick Mitchell - WSDOT Northwest Region

Partners not in attendance:

- Steve Thomsen - Snohomish County
- Connie Dunn - City of Sultan

Others in attendance:

- Steve Lewis, Bob Munchinski - HW Lochner
- Kristine dos Remedios - EnviroIssues
- Jeff Lundstrom - Perteet

**Welcome and
Introductions**

Renee Zimmerman, WSDOT, welcomed the group to the meeting and thanked them for coming. She asked the attendees to sign in and confirm their contact information. Attendees introduced themselves and the agency they were representing

Renee reviewed the agenda with the group. The purpose of the meeting was to outline the US 2 Route Development Plan (RDP) scope, schedule, and key milestones, and establish the roles and responsibilities of the US 2 Corridor Working Group (CWG). The CWG partners were asked to help the US 2 team define the study area boundaries and appropriate corridor segments for analysis. The status of the data collection activities to date was also reviewed and a brief summary of the local agency interviews was provided.

Discussion:

- None

US 2 RDP Scope, Schedule, Milestones and Expected Outcomes

Steve Lewis, HW Lochner, went over the US 2 RDP scope, schedule and milestones, and expected outcomes for the project. Steve referred to the second handout in the packet of materials distributed to the partners labeled "Major Milestones."

The project is currently in the existing conditions/data collection phase. The initial partner interviews, that each agency participated in between the end of November until mid-December, was part of this phase. Data collection for existing traffic conditions will be completed by the first or second week of February 2006. The first technical report on existing conditions will be issued in the middle of May 2006.

Business community open houses will be held in March 2006 and the first round of local agency presentations will be held in July. The Draft RDP will be completed toward the end of September 2006. When the draft is released the team will host a second round of open houses and local agency presentations. The Corridor Working Group partners will also convene to review the draft.

The team is working towards two outcomes. First, a list of short-term projects that the CWG partners can support and jointly seek funding for design and construction in the near term, will be developed. Second, a long-term vision for the corridor, that incorporates the short-term solutions, will be outlined to guide future transportation improvements on US 2.

Discussion:

- Hiller West, City of Monroe, asked if there was a schedule for the modeling work that will be done for the US 2 RDP. Steve said that there would be no modeling completed as a part of the RDP work. The US 2 team is going to rely on the model being generated by the City of Monroe through their current transportation planning efforts as well as supplementary information from the PSRC model. The team will also conduct a spreadsheet analysis for weekend peaks. The travel demand component will be completed by the middle of February.
- Tom Gathmann, City of Monroe, said that the model Monroe is developing does not have weekend peak information. Steve said that the US 2 team is collecting specific data available for weekend traffic to identify any patterns in weekend and seasonal traffic compared to weekday traffic. Snohomish County will also conduct weekend turning counts in January to help with this analysis. WSDOT also conducted 7-day counts at ten locations along the corridor in order to observe the difference between weekend and weekday traffic. Supplemental information gathered by the US 2 team will be provided to Monroe's transportation consultants.
- Kevin Murphy, PSRC, asked if the team was going to write up a methodology for forecasting so that the CWG partners could review it before the work is complete. Steve said the methodology and data sources would be outlined in a supplemental document to the RDP.

CWG Roles and Responsibilities

Renee led the discussion on the Corridor Working Group Roles and Expectations document, which was the third handout in the packet given to the partners. The document was also emailed to the group on Friday, December 9th, to give the partners some time to review the document before the kick-off meeting. Renee did acknowledge that this was not much time for review, so the document would be reviewed as a group and the partners would be given more time after the meeting to submit comments to the

project team.

Renee highlighted the more important sections and responsibilities of the CWG Partners, WSDOT and the consultant team and solicited feedback from the group. The partners did agree to the ground rules, roles and responsibilities, and communication protocol for the CWG. Specifically the CWG agreed to act as an advisory body to the WSDOT and consultant team to identify needs, priorities, and recommended solutions for transportation issues along US 2. The CWG partners also agreed that the group would strive to meet the interests of all partners regarding recommendations for US 2, but at minimum, be willing to “live with” the recommended actions in the final RDP.

The main contact for each agency was also clarified. It is still unclear who will be representing Snohomish County at this time. Hiller West and Tom Gathmann will both equally represent the City of Monroe. Bill Cross will be the representative for the Town of Index instead of Lisa Stowe. Chris Yates will serve as the contact for Skykomish but Mayor Charlotte Mackner will attend the CWG meetings.

Discussion:

- Tom G. noted that each jurisdiction might have a different definition of local access, which should be reflected in the vision statement. Renee noted his comment.
- Kevin Murphy asked that cost-effectiveness be added to the list of factors to consider when evaluating projects for inclusion in the final RDP. The attendees agreed to this addition and Renee noted his comment.
- In relation to the outcomes, or measures of success, Chris Picard said that he was concerned that the need for a phasing plan may give the public and elected officials the wrong idea. If funding becomes available for a project that is labeled as a long-range project in the RDP, WSDOT and the partners would be willing to implement the project, even if the short-range projects had not been completed first. It is important that the implementing agencies do not get locked into a phasing plan that dictates a succession of projects.
- Hiller asked if the US 2 RDP would be adopted by the affected jurisdictions. Chris Picard said that is not something that is normally done, but is something to consider. It is important to detail the parties that are responsible for implementing the projects. Hiller agreed and noted that the RDP would have “more teeth” if it is adopted into each jurisdiction’s comprehensive plan.
- Kevin noted that there are regional processes that must be considered before larger agencies such as WSDOT and PSRC sign off on an RDP. By sitting at the US 2 CWG table, PSRC is committed to getting the final US 2 RDP incorporated into the regional plan. It would be beneficial to keep the PSRC policy board informed of the US 2 project as it progresses to facilitate this process.
- Bill Cross, Town of Index, asked if the project team thought that funding might be available for a Monroe bypass in the next 10 to 15 years. Chris said that the Monroe bypass has been considered as a legitimate project for a while but it is competing for funding with other projects like I-405 and SR 520. While funding is possible, Chris would not say it is probable. The RDP document may help to show the need for a Monroe bypass. It is important to hear how committed Snohomish County is to a Monroe bypass project, as they can help promote the importance of a Monroe bypass.
- Richard Warren, WSDOT, noted the ground rule of respecting each other’s time and commitment to the US 2 RDP project. He noted that WSDOT is committed to providing ample time for document review prior to meetings and that WSDOT will expect the partners to stay within the timeline for providing comments.

- Hiller said that a project status report or summary that is updated periodically would be helpful when he briefs his elected officials or city council on the US 2 RDP project. Renee said that she would commit to producing and updating this kind of summary sheet and would send it out to all of the partners to use.

Local Agency Interview Results

Kristine dos Remedios, EnviroIssues, provided a brief overview of the common themes that emerged from the initial partner interviews conducted between the end of November and mid-December. Ten individual agency interviews were held between WSDOT staff, and members of its US 2 RDP consultant team, in order to identify agency issues and concerns regarding US 2 and to establish a basis throughout the US 2 RDP project.

Agency representatives answered questions about how US 2 has changed over the years, the improvements they would like to see made to US 2, and what the partners would like to see result from the US 2 RDP. The partners also identified their community's greatest needs for pedestrian and non-motorized facilities. WSDOT staff also asked the partners if they could provide any recent traffic data and/or local reports, plans or studies that should be consulted during the US 2 RDP process. The partners also helped WSDOT identify local events or festivals that staff should attend to conduct public outreach, and when their local elected officials and city councils meet, so WSDOT staff could attend to provide briefings about the US 2 RDP.

The partners identified many common themes regarding how US 2 has changed over the years and the improvements that the agencies would like to see made to the corridor. Kristine reviewed common themes for the group, as noted below:

- **Safety** – All partners identified safety as the most important issue to address along US 2. Safety has always been an issue for the corridor but has become a major focus in the last ten years.
- **Growth** – Communities along US 2 are growing. With this growth comes an increase in traffic and development (curb cuts). For some communities, US 2 is their “main street,” and capacity is needed to accommodate both local and through traffic.
- **Traffic Congestion** – With the recent and anticipated growth along US 2, traffic congestion has become and will continue to be a major issue, especially during weekends and on holidays.
- **Intersection Improvements** – Each agency identified specific locations within their community where improvements need to be made to improve safety and traffic flow along US 2.
- **Access and Turning Management** – Management of turning movements, and access into and out of businesses and residential developments, is necessary to improve safety and traffic flow.
- **Capacity** – Every agency said that increased capacity along US 2 is already necessary and will be even more important as communities grow. An assessment of how much capacity can be accommodated within the existing right-of-way of US 2 should be conducted, in order to identify whether or not there is a need for another east-west alternative route or bypass of US 2.
- **Financing Plan** – Clear financing, phasing, and prioritization plans should be detailed in the final RDP to serve as a strategy for the US 2 partners to jointly implement the recommended projects.
- **Pedestrians and Bikes** – Partners want to see safe, designated places for

pedestrians and cyclists along the US 2 corridor; either on wide shoulders or on alternate parallel local routes. School children, recreational users and local residents all walk and bike on US 2, which in some areas is not safe.

- **Bridges** – Bridges are an important part of the transportation system for the communities within the US 2 corridor, and are important to maintain. Bridges serve as emergency evacuation routes and links to necessary services such as medical care for the residents who live along US 2.
- **Enforcement** – Partners noted that increased enforcement, specifically the enforcement of speed limits, is necessary to increase safety along US 2.
- **Short- and Long-Term Solutions** – Partners want to see clear solutions to address safety and mobility issues along US 2 in both the short- and long-term. Communities should not have to wait 10 or even 20 years to see congestion relief and increased safety along US 2.

Discussion:

- None

Corridor Definition

Steve Lewis asked the partners to help the US 2 project team with two decisions: the beginning and ending points of the US 2 study area and how to break the corridor into segments for analysis, based on the corridor's geography and the characteristics of each area along the US 2 corridor.

Study Area

To begin the discussion on the study area boundaries, Steve proposed that the study area extend from Bickford Road in the City of Snohomish to 5th Street in the Town of Skykomish. After some discussion, the group decided that the US 2 RDP study area should extend from Bickford Road in the City of Snohomish to the east limit of the town of Skykomish

Discussion:

- Mayor Charlotte Mackner, Town of Skykomish, said that the study area should include the entire Town of Skykomish. The main street going into town is 5th Street, but the town extends beyond that. She asked the team to change the east boundary to the east limits of Skykomish.

Corridor Segments

The US 2 RDP study area is approximately 45 miles in length. For the purposes of analysis, the entire corridor is difficult to consider as a whole, especially because various areas of the corridor are different in character and have different needs than other areas. The project team asked the partners to provide some insight on how to segment US 2 for analysis.

The partners agreed to the following three segments for analysis:

- Segment 1: Bickford Road to the west city limits of Monroe
- Segment 2: The west city limits of Monroe to the east city limits of Gold Bar
- Segment 3: The east city limits of Gold Bar to the east city limits of Skykomish

Discussion:

- Hiller said that the urban areas of Monroe and Sultan are closely linked. They generate a lot of traffic through this length of US 2 and recommended that they are included in the same segment.
- Steve Lewis asked if Gold Bar generated the same type of linked traffic that Monroe and Sultan generate, and asked if Gold Bar should be included in the same segment

as Monroe and Gold Bar. Hiller agreed that this would make sense.

Data Collection Update

Bob Munchinski, HW Lochner, provided the partners an update on the data collection activities for the project. Bob referred to the last two handouts in the packet given to the CWG partners, which included a list of eleven (11) intersections the team plans to analyze during the data collection stage and a map of the intersection locations. This information would be supplemented by the information provided from Monroe's current study for its transportation plan update. He asked the partners to provide comments on the list of identified intersections.

Bob also noted that the team was in the process of collecting any relevant plans and reports from the local agencies that should be considered during the US 2 planning process. This effort includes collecting each jurisdiction's comprehensive plans, right-of-way plans, and bridge condition reports.

An inventory of pedestrian trails, bike lanes and other non-motorized facilities will also be conducted in order to identify deficiencies and develop recommendations for non-motorized facilities.

Summary tables of the information collected will be given to the partners.

Discussion:

- John Light, City of Gold Bar, said that Pickle Farm Road and US 2 should be added to the list of intersections to be analyzed. John believed that WSDOT already had a project planned for that intersection but that should be confirmed.
- Kevin Murphy noted that all functionally classified facilities that intersect US 2, such as Highway 9, State Route 522, and State Route 203, should be added to the list of intersections for analysis.
- Tom Gathmann said that it would be useful to have a list of all of the intersections that will be analyzed as a part of the study, including the intersections where Snohomish County will conduct weekend and weekday counts and the intersections where the US 2 team will rely on the Monroe study for traffic data. Bob agreed to make this comprehensive list and note how the data would be collected for each intersection (US 2 project team, Snohomish County, or City of Monroe)
- Bill Cross asked about the source of the ADT counts noted on the map of US 2. Bob said that the counts on the map were made in August and were taken over a 72-hour period. The counts were not adjusted for seasonal variations.
- Larry Ingalls, City of Snohomish, asked how communities like Startup would be consulted during the US 2 RDP process. He recognized that Steve Thomsen from Snohomish County should be the one to represent the interests of these communities, as they are a part of unincorporated Snohomish County.

Comments from Observers

Discussion:

- None

Next Steps

The community open houses are planned for March 2006. The next time the US 2 CWG will get together as a group will be in June 2006 for the two-day Design Charette sessions. Between now and then, the project team will use email to have the partners review and comment on project documents and technical information. Renee said that she will depend on the partners to keep their elected officials and city councils up to date on the planning process, but will plan to come out at least twice during the next 12-18 months to hold briefings.

Action Items:

- Partners will send the name and contact information of community groups that the project team should contact, or at minimum add to the email outreach list, regarding the US 2 RDP to Renee (zimmerR@wsdot.wa.gov). Likewise, if people contact the partners about the RDP project, their comments and contact information should also be sent to Renee.
- Partners will send open house and meeting location ideas to Kristine (kdosremedios@enviroissues.com)
- Renee will develop and regularly update a project summary for the partners to use to brief their elected officials and city councils on the US 2 RDP.
- Renee will send the agency interview summaries to the respective agencies for their review and comment before they are finalized.
- Renee will incorporate comments from the partners from the kick-off meeting into the Goals and Expectations document and send a revised version to the partners for their comments.
- Bob will update the list of intersections that will be analyzed to include intersections in Monroe where existing traffic data will be used, and the intersections where Snohomish County will conduct traffic counts and send a revised version to the partners for their comments.
- Partners will provide any additional comments on the Goals and Expectations document by December 30, 2005
- Partners will provide any additional comments on the selected intersections for analysis by December 30, 2005
- Mark Melroy, King County, will check on the availability of getting weekend turning movement counts through King County.

Handouts

- CWG Kick-off Session Agenda
- US 2 RDP Major Milestones
- US 2 CWG Draft Goals and Expectations
- US 2 RDP Draft Study Limits
- Preliminary List of Intersections on US 2 to be Analyzed
- Map of Intersection Locations on US 2 and Corridor Weekday/Weekend ADTs